

BOB DYLAN ENTERTAINS THE POPE

November 20, 1997 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The famous rock star Bob Dylan performed before Pope John Paul II at a Roman Catholic youth festival on September 27 in Bologna, Italy. A crowd of 300,000 young people attended the festival. The 56-year-old Dylan, who has performed for more than 30 years, sang two songs directly to the pope. Dylan then took off his cowboy hat and bowed before him.

The Catholic organizer of the festival, Cardinal Ernesto Vecchi, said that he had invited Dylan because he is the "representative of the best type of rock" and "he has a spiritual nature."

The Associated Press exclaimed: "It's the stuff of which legends are made: the rebel who's been knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door meeting the man with the keys to the kingdom."

From my "hippie" days prior to my conversion in 1973, I remember Bob Dylan very well. I started listening to rock music intently in 1959 and I was consumed with that type of music until I was saved in 1973. That era was the heyday of Dylan's career, and I still recall the hauntingly appealing nature of his music. He helped to popularize the merging of folk and rock music and sang some very immoral songs as well as songs with pacifistic, civil rights, socialistic, humanistic, and new age themes. He was one of the chief poets of the rock generation, with songs such as "The Times They Are A-Changing." His songs posed many interesting questions, but he had no answers. In "Blowing in the Wind," he asked such things as, "How many roads must a man walk down before he is called a man?" What is the answer? "The answer, my friends, is blowing in the wind..." What does that mean? It means he doesn't know the answer and he is not sure anyone knows the answer. That was as much truth as I knew before I was saved, and, sadly, that is the philosophy of most of Dylan's fans because they have rejected the blessed Word of God. His vast influence has been anything but wholesome and godly. There was violence at some Dylan concerts. For example, in Slane, Ireland, in July 1984, the police had to barricade themselves inside their station as mobs of Dylan fans besieged them, rioting, breaking windows, and overturning cars.

In the late 1970s, some claimed that Dylan had become a Christian, but he never had a clear testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, and his attempt to make religious albums did not pan out commercially. The July 21, 1983, issue of the Washington Post noted that Dylan believes in reincarnation and that "everyone is born knowing the truth." An article in the San Luis Obispo (California) Register for March 16, 1983, quoted Dylan as saying: "Whoever said I was Christian? Like Gandhi, I'm Christian, I'm Jewish, I'm a Moslem, I'm a Hindu. I am a humanist." In recent years Dylan has practiced Lubavitch Hasidism, an ultra-orthodox, very strict form of Judaism, suggesting he has returned to his Jewish roots.

The world loves rock music, but the world does not love spiritual music. If a music is capable of drawing an unsaved, worldly crowd, you can be sure it is not spiritual in nature. Wicked music cannot be used to glorify Jesus Christ.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).